WHO IS JESUS?

THE GOSPEL IN SUMMARY

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Who is Jesus? (Intro)

We have all heard the story of a young man that came to earth many centuries ago. He was not like every other men as his birth and his death were full of mysteries that has never been seen in the history of mankind.

As recorded, he was born into one of the tribe of Israel called Judah, to a family of a man named Joseph. Scripture told us that he had a wife called Mary, who, according to the story, was a virgin.

One glorious day, an angel of God appeared unto this virgin woman and told her that she'll give birth to a male child, that she should name him JESUS. We all know the story.

It's an unusual story we've all grown up to hear either in our schools or in our churches. A virgin giving birth to a boy. But this was just a tip of an iceberg when we take a deep look into the life of the boy whom the angel announced his arrival before he was born.

He was not the first man that an angel will proclaim his arrival in the scripture - we have Isaac, Samson, and John [The Baptist], who also had their births announced by angels before they were born.

However, these men weren't begotten by virgin women. As a matter of fact, the mother of Isaac, Samson, and John were barren before they were able to conceive. These women gave birth in their old age, but that cannot be said about Mary.

The angel that delivered the good news was even mentioned, he was not an anonymous, but was the same Angel Gabriel that announced the birth of John [The Baptist]. Was that a coincidence?

John and Jesus were born in the same year, and their birth were announced by the same Angel. But these happened in different cities, one in Nazareth of Galilee and the other in Bethlehem of Judea.

It was not until Jesus grew up that he was able to meet John [The Baptist] and his disciples, according to the scripture. But the ministry of John differs from the ministry of Jesus; one was to prepare the way for the arrival of the other.

These happened in the two most populous cities in Israel, Galilee and Judea. Not until it was time for Jesus to fulfil the scripture and be who God wants him to be did he met John [The Baptist]. But John only appeared few times in the whole story when we look at the life of Jesus.

During his time when he was on earth, Jesus was a man like every other man, but his works and the prophecy spoken concerning him proved him to be much more than just an ordinary man. Although he wore cloths, eat, walk, sweat, poop like all men does, his testimonies, his wisdom, and his revelation were beyond that of ordinary men.

His mother was aware of course, because it was revealed unto her what sort of child she would conceived and what the child would grow up to be.

However, apart from his father and mother who received the information from Angel Gabriel, other men (near and far) were unaware of who Jesus was. Mary kept this information as a secret in her heart... she does not reveal it to anyone, not even to any of her relatives (Luke 2 vs 51 - 52).

Of course, who would believe her story? It was a strange and an unusual thing, something that has never happened since God created the heaven and the earth.

If such event repeat itself, would you believe if you are told?

I couldn't but wonder what gave the family (Mary and Joseph) the strength to raise a child like that to the age of maturity. They were normal people handpicked by God to raise an extraordinary child; that in itself was a task that many were not qualified for.

God choose only those who are qualified for his tasks and I believe God will never make a mistake when it comes to choosing the right people for his assignment.

There were other kids in Judea that Jesus grew up with, but the scripture didn't reveal any of that. The scripture is indeed focused on JESUS - he is the main character of the entire new testament, others were merely contributors, partakers, and narrators to his story and to his history.

Our main focus as believers should be JESUS CHRIST. Nothing else matters.

RAISING JESUS CHRIST AS AN INFANT WAS AN ASSIGNMENT - IF NOT, JESUS WOULD HAVE COME TO THE WORLD AS A GROWN UP MAN

A lot have been said about him even before his arrival. He was not just a man that suddenly appeared (popped) out of nowhere. God has passed the information about him to his prophets thousands of years before he was born.

The whole Israel had been waiting for him before he was given birth to, although not the way they expected.

The Pharisees doubted his identity. The Sadducees doubted his theory. The chief priests and high priest became his mortal enemy. The scribes questioned his words. In a world full of envy, bitterness, and disbelief, he remained consistent with his word and does not deviate from his purpose.

He was not loved by all and was rejected by many, simply because he did not reveal how mighty he his as a God in the flesh. Simply because he did not reveal his prowess as the son. Jesus had everything he needed to reveal himself as the son in a simpler way, but that was not the path that was chosen for him.

He revealed himself as a prophet, but not as a king. There are lots to learn about this man (God), which I will dive into in the next part of this book.

Why Jesus came to earth

If we are to fully understand Jesus Christ and his ministry, we must first understand why he came to the earth and why he left.

Unlike the devil that was chased out of heaven (Revelation 12:9), Jesus left heaven and came into the earth out of his own free will. He didn't come here because there was no place for him to stay in heaven, or because he was looking for somewhere to hide, or because he was demoted from his throne.

God wants something done on earth and there was no one in heaven and on earth that was qualified to do the job, except Jesus Christ. He simply "surrendered" himself to be used by God. He surrendered himself as the son to be used by the father.

The work that Jesus Christ came to do on earth cannot be done by any angel, by any spirit, or by any man. It was a task that God found no one qualified for except his son.

What is the task?

Man have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3 vs 23). It has been difficult for man to behold the glory of God ever since God withdrawn his glory from man in the garden of Eden. Sin separated man from his maker.

Man was cut off from the terminal of life, resulting to his death and decay. The fall of man gave birth to death.

DEATH IS A SPIRIT THAT WAS BEGOTTEN FROM MAN'S FIRST DISOBEDIENCE

Ever since the fall of Adam, God has been looking for a way to redeem man back unto himself. Sin created a lot of lapses in the way God relate with man.

The existence of sin reminded God about man's disobedience every day; sin became a parasite that contend against the will of God for man.

Man lost his purpose. Sin took over. Death became glorified in flesh. It was a disaster that God didn't planned for because he did not created man to live out (outside) of his will.

Man subjected himself under the will of God in the garden of Eden, but outside the garden, he became tyrants and bandits, being controlled by the lust of the flesh and the desire of sin.

God tried to curtain man's disobedience by giving the law (Exodus 20). He tried to relate with man in the way man understood, while working a way out. The law, as it turned out, seem to do more damage than good. The law strengthened sin and gave it the power to condemn and to put soul to death.

Death became man's enemy, and sin became a medium by which the devil had access to man and to his soul. Who can deliver man from sin? Who can loosen the grip of death over his soul? There was no one.

The heart of man became a playing ground for the devil to operate. Man was created to serve God, to worship him, but sin hijacked the purpose from him.

Man is God's investment, but the devil was the one reaping all the benefits. His creation turned his back on him to serve another master. God has lost man to sin and death, what can bring him back? Who can redeem man back to his rightful master? Who is willing to pay the price?

The book of Revelation 5 told of the grand event that shook the earth to its knees and also bear the witness of how important the task was to God and to the hosts of heaven. If we are to understand the beginning, we must learn to look at the end and then tread from there.

The visions of John that were recorded in the book of Revelation does not only foretold the future, but also told of the past and of the present. God put a bounty on man's head to redeem him back to himself and no one in heaven, on earth, and under the earth was worthy to pay the price.

Jesus came to the world because there was none elsewhere that was qualified for the task. If there was, he wouldn't have needed to come. Sin was ravaging the earth, man has been separated from his God, he was the only one capable to bring things back to order.

The birth of Jesus was the beginning of a new era in the timeline of God. Jesus came for two main reasons:

1. To vanquish sin
2. To redeem mankind back to God

Man does not need to die because we were not created to die. Sin brought death. The existence of sin is the existence of death. Jesus came to cleanse man from his sin, and by doing so, he also neutralizes death and the power it holds over man’s soul.

Let us know this, Jesus Christ gave himself "willingly" for the goodness of mankind. He let himself to be led like a sheep to the slaughter house, not because we are qualified, but because the father's will must be done. He had already given himself up before he was born - it was not something man determined for him.

He had already made up his mind to save you and I before he was born. He came because of you and I, because of our past generations and because of our future generations.

Didn't he deserve to be celebrated, especially on his birthday? His birthday to us is joy. His birthday to God is joy. But to him, it is the beginning of a new chapter in the lives of men.

How did he know his purpose?

It is one thing to know where you come from, and it is another thing to know why you came from where you come from. These are riddles to all men that dwell on earth, isn't it? But not to Jesus Christ.

Jesus knew where he came from, and why he came from where he came from, even at a tender age. No ordinary man on earth can know the details of his existence "before" he was born, but Jesus knew.

He knew both his past and his future, and was even courageous to speak about it among men.

The moment a child left his mother's womb, he remembers nothing and knows nothing until he reaches a certain age. Although he lives and breathe, he his completely unaware of everything that go on around him because he has no knowledge about them at all. Nothing makes sense, and everything is just pure noise and distraction.

From age 0 to about age 5, it is like he is living in a dream, whereas he is living a reality.

However, we all reach a certain age where we begin to remember what we heard and what we saw, and from there our lives started as kids. We learn to pick new words, remember faces we saw, understand and comprehend human emotions, while adapting to people and things that surrounded us.

It is a slow journey that required almost 8 years before we begin to mature, and from there adulthood started.

Adam did not experience or passed through any of these because he was molded from the sand. He was not given birth to. After he was made, his purpose was clearly made known unto him too. He was told to work in the garden and to take care of it (Gen 2:15). What work did he do in the garden? His first work was to name other creatures that God created (Gen 2:19-20).

From his birth, Adam was given a purpose. He was not just created to be idle but to serve his God. Tending the garden and taking care of it were service - he was not serving himself, but was serving the God that put him there. Eve also had her purpose! she was to be a helper (Gen 2:18).

Do they benefit from their service? Of course, they do. They can eat as much as they want from any of the trees planted in the garden. Their only need was food and God provided it for them - they don't need to ask. Before they were created, their meals were already waiting for them.

Jesus came to the world knowing why he came, just as Adam knew why he was in the garden. He was not "directly" told by any angel or by any prophet what he came to do, or the path that he needed to walk. From his birth, his only guardian was his parent. Apart from his parent, there were none else that contributed to his childhood.

His parent knew "a bit" about him because they were told, but that information was a "caution". It was to let them know the type of child that they were about to raise. Moreover, Jesus was a suckling when two men bore witness of him to his parent, Anna the Prophetess (Like 2:36-38) and Simeon (Luke 2:25-35).

These two witnesses testified about Jesus according to what God had revealed unto them beforehand, not unto Jesus because he was still a little child, but unto his parent.

Who had all the information? It was his parent. The angels, Anna, and Simeon all talked about him when he had no knowledge about himself as a little child. He couldn't have learnt about his purpose from them.

The first time Jesus talked about his purpose was when he was 12 years old, according to the scripture. At the age of 12, he confidently told his parent why he came to the earth and what he came to do in just few sentences.

He merely said, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" - Luke 2:49 (ESV)

The full context can be read from Luke 2:41-50.

Was he talking about Joseph his father here? Definitely not. Joseph did not build that temple. Then, who was Jesus referring to as his father? The owner of the temple of course. The owner of the temple is the father that Jesus was referring to. So, who owned the temple?

The temple has been there for centuries - it may be the same temple built by Solomon. Was Solomon his father? Hmmm. He was telling his father and mother about another father at the tender age of 12. The existence of another father gave him the sense of his purpose.

He called the temple his father's house, but the temple was not built by Joseph. He claimed the temple as his right because he believed he was the son of the person that owned the temple, which is either Solomon or God. Jesus came from the lineage of David, Solomon's father, which is the "direct lineage" of Joseph his father (Matthew 1:1-16).

If Jesus called the temple his father's house as a direct descendant from the lineage of David and of Solomon, his son - he was right. Solomon his forefather first built it.

However, kings don't live in the temple. The temple is a house dedicated to God. Solomon wouldn't call the temple his house, so why would Jesus do? He must be referring to God. He was found teaching in the temple which he called his father's house. Was he teaching about Solomon? Definitely not. He was teaching about God.

Right from the age of twelve, he already knew God as his father and was found teaching about his father in the temple. As a man, how did he knew that God was his father? That is a question that no mortal can answer. At the age of 12, he was convinced that God was his father and was even confident to tell his earthly father and mother.

BELIEVING THAT GOD WAS HIS FATHER WAS THE FIRST STEP IN REALIZING HIS PURPOSE, AS THE SON

Jesus never called or referred to Joseph as his father throughout the scripture. The word "Father" was synonyms to "God" in Jesus dictionary.

He was so sure. He was so convinced. He believed it to the point of death. His conviction was affirmed because God regarded him as his son too.

Not once did God "openly proclaimed" Jesus Christ as his son, but these happened years after Jesus knew God as his true father. He was already certain before his open manifestation and before he began his ministry.

God called Jesus his son:

i.) When he was baptized (Matthew 3:16-17)
ii.) At his transfiguration on the mountain (Matthew 17:5)

He came to know about his purpose by first identifying his source. If Jesus had seen Joseph as his "true father", he could have become a carpenter just as his father, and his purpose would have been lost. But God planned it well.

Whether we believe it or not, Jesus was a man when he was on earth, but he saw himself to be much more because he knew where he came from, and the reason why he came from where he came from. He knew his source. He knew his father. He knew his identity.

If Jesus hadn't believed he is the son, he wouldn't have been able to give his life on the cross and we wouldn't have been able to call ourselves his sons. He knew his purpose by first knowing God as his father and his source, and by putting himself under his will.

His Father's will must be done.

Our Father's will must be done.

Why he needed to die

All men look up to death as an enemy, as a strong foe, as a disaster biding its time to strike, but, if we are to put ourselves in Jesus shoes, we'll understand that death is not a master of itself but was a subject in the hand of the creator. Death is not all that bad as it seems, although we do fear it greatly.

Jesus feared death too... he cried to the father in the garden of Gethsemane when he was about to be taken by the soldiers. He was sorrowful unto death (Matthew 26 vs 38). He was looking death in the eye, he knew what was about to happen, he knew there was no way of escape. He must face death if he has to conquer it.

Jesus Christ was threatened several times before he finally gets to meet death on the cross. They could have stoned him like Stephen and end his life on the streets of Jerusalem, but someway somehow, they could not touch him. Death couldn't touch him because he had the power over it.

Jesus was a man that had the power to forgive sin when he was on earth (Luke 5:20-24). Sin couldn't touch him, so why would death do? The wages of sin is death - but to him that has been declared holy and righteous, death is of no concern. Sin brought death, but Jesus was not a sinner.

Sin is the primary cause of death. All have sinned, so in one way or the other, we are all entitle to die. The blood of Adam (the first man) flow through our veins - the sin is in the blood. It is inherited. Although Jesus was born by a woman, the seed did not come from a man, and the woman was a virgin.

God merely borrowed the womb of Mary and use it as a portal to launch his son to earth. If he must redeem man, he must be man. Spirit does not have blood, which is the primary ingredient for the atonement of sin.

ADAM IS THE FATHER OF ALL MEN EXCEPT JESUS

It was through sin that the first blood was shed (Genesis 4:8-11), it must be by blood that the first sin be removed.

The blood that flow through the veins of all men is polluted because we all came from one source, which is Adam. The source of Jesus is not Adam, hence, he does not inherit the sin that resulted to man's fall. Sin had no claim over Jesus life as it does over all men's life - he was immune to death.

We must understand that there is physical death and there is spiritual death - the former occurred as a result of the later. Our spiritual death in the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:17) leads to our physical death outside the garden.

Man's life begins to deteriorate the moment he stepped out of the garden. Yes, Adam lived very long, but he eventually died. Outside the garden, the age of man begins to dwindle down.

There was a time when God cursed man to live shorter (Genesis 6:3), which was also as a result of man's disobedience. Sin was a mess in the lives of men; it was a stain on our glorified body. It turns our backs to God and it turn God's back to us. It made God to withhold his blessings - man begin to receive nothing but curse.

However, God is willing to remove the stains on our glorified body and erase all the curses that our blood bears. The blood of no man is qualified to atone for man's sin because all blood came directly from one source, which is Adam. Jesus didn't come from Adam; he didn't inherit the blood that flowed through us because his seed did not come from a man.

ONLY JESUS BLOOD WAS QUALIFIED TO ATONE FOR MAN SIN - ALL MEN'S BLOOD CAME FROM ADAM EXCEPT HIS

The blood of Jesus is pure. It is undiluted. God made sure that no intercourse ever occurred and that no blood is transferred during his ovulation. (N.B: sperm comes from blood). He must not be polluted by this world if he has to save it. His birth was a mystery, and it has to be.

If we look clearly, *his source determined his strength*. All that he is and all that he will ever be had been determined before his birth. He came to the world knowing that one day he will have to shed his blood. His precious blood. His blood made him special; it differentiates him from all men that walked on earth.

The work of redemption started from the birth of Jesus. It didn't just happen overnight. It didn't just happen on the cross. It happened from the moment he was conceived. His blood is very important because that is the only blood that can atone for man's sin.

God made the provision, created the pathway, removed all obstacles, so that one day the blood can be shed.

As I said earlier, Jesus have power over death. Jesus didn't die because death grabbed him like it does to all men, no. Jesus died exactly when he wanted to die. It is out of his own free will. If he ever wants to save man, he must shed his blood. If he ever wants to conquer death, he must let go of his life.

Can the living fight death? No. He willingly gave up his breath on the cross. Death didn't choose the battlefield, Jesus did. The whole 33 years of his life leaded him to exactly where he supposed to be - on the cross. All of his 33 years was for this one purpose - to sacrifice himself.

The root of all men's problem is sin. He could heal several lame and deaf, raise several deaths, but there will always be more. Spiritual death came as a result of sin. Physical death came as a result of sin. If we are to gain eternal life as he promised, he must cleanse that stain on our glorified body so that God can look at us once more as he does in the garden of Eden - pure and holy.

Salvation is a work planned and fulfilled by God. He used his son as a medium to reach us and to bring us back to himself. God does all the work because he still loves man. We are not totally lost as the devil - we are redeemable, and in us his glory can be revealed once more.

Jesus as a man

When we take a deep look at the life of Jesus, we could see that he came into the world as a man because he had to. It was part of the requirement for the work that he came to do on earth. *He must be man to save man*.

Also, his birth had to be a mystery because the work he came to do required it. He was no man son except of his father (God) alone. During his years on earth, no man knew that he was not Joseph's true son. The secret was kept between Mary and Joseph as long as he lived.

His appearance as a man does not differ from other men too. It won't be derogatory to say that he looked just as your neighbor when he was on earth. No special skin tone, no premium-looking golden hair, no superman muscles and laser eye. His physical ability was the same as yours and mine

His humility reflected in all areas of his life, starting from when he was a kid. He was obedient to his earthly father and mother (Luke 2 vs 51); he listened to them and lived under their roof till he became a man that can take care of himself.

THE PHARISEES AND THE SADDUCEES SAW HIM AS A FINE YOUNG MAN IN HIS THIRTIES, NOT AS THE GOD OF ALL AGES

We are talking about the creator of "everything" living under the plate and spoon of his creation.

What humility can surpass that?

The scripture referred to Moses as the humblest man on earth during his time (Numbers 12 vs 3), but Jesus broke that record during his time. Moses, as a child, was raised as a prince in one of the richest kingdom on earth, but Jesus didn't chose the palace of Herod but the house of an ordinary carpenter to begin his life.

His background does not reflect his true identity in a tiny bit - he was a king (the ruler of everything) from where he came from, but he chose to settle for a low life and not the life of wealth when he was on earth. He chose to serve and not to be served. He chose to be suppressed and not to dominate.

Jesus is the opposite of what man has become. Man thrive to live the life of luxury and of power, to flaunt their muscles and strength, to be worshipped and to be hailed, to be respected and to be honored, to be pampered and to be clapped for.

GOD VISITED HIS PEOPLE IN THE WAY THEY WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND - IN WEAKNESS, NOT IN STRENGTH

It was not so from the very beginning.

Jesus did not live his life to impress, to suppress, to flaunt, and to repress; he was the exact replica of a man that God wants every man to be. He was the exact replica of Adam without the forbidden fruit and its seed. He was a perfect man that God deemed worthy to called his son.

When we talk about Jesus, we can't but mention "sin" because that is the root of what man has become and that is the (only) reason why Jesus came. We may pretend that sin does not exist, but denying its existence is denying the existence of Jesus.

The primary content of the gospel of Jesus is how to be like him, and to be like him means we must be sin-free.

His life is an example of what God expect from the new man, I mean a sin-less man. He was on that cross because of no crime yet he chose to let go. It was an example that Stephen leant from and held on to when he was stoned to death - he didn't curse them but instead prayed for them, just as Jesus did. He looked up to Jesus and saw himself.

Jesus lived a perfect life for 33 years, but today, it is hard to see a man that can live perfectly for just a day. We rejoice for his birth. We rejoice for his death. We rejoice for his resurrection. We celebrate it every year as believers from the moment we are born till we die, but our lives are not an exact replica of his. Most are living the lives of falsehood.

We all want that power, to rebuke, to command, to loose, to bind. We all want to turn Garri into Jollof rice, to turn water into gasoline, but practically, we are living a life that does not fit within the purpose of what we were created for. If you want to do what Jesus does, you will have to be like him.

Many Christians misunderstood the Holy Spirit as a power. No, he is the key to that power. The power is Jesus Christ! Christ sent the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit didn't sent Christ. When we talk about power, we are not only talking about the extraordinary supernatural life of Jesus Christ but about his ordinary life, as a man.

If we overlook his life as a man (which in God's eye is extraordinary), we won't get a clearer picture of him "as the son". God called him his son when he was a man, not before he was a man. Throughout the entire scripture, God did not call any man his son, not even Adam.

There was nothing like "father and son" relationship between God and man until Jesus arrived. He stood in the place of what man should be; through him, we receive son ship.

Jesus is called "the son of man", not because he had earthly parent, but because he stood for everything that man supposed to stand for. He is the exact copy of a man without sin. His life was the exact copy of a life without sin.

He was not ashamed to be called "the son of man" because he knew that man will one day be called sons in the kingdom of his father "through" him. He accomplished a lot as a man and lived a life that serve as an example for those that will one day choose to walk on his pathway.

Jesus as a man is everything man without sin.

Grace (part 1)

Over the past few weeks we've been learning about Jesus in multiple dimensions, especially the *sin aspect of man* (which I greatly emphasized on) and the *righteous aspect of Jesus*.

The thing is, we won't understand and fully acknowledge the hefty price that was paid for our souls if we do not know what the price was paid for. We may see God as powerful and mighty, but it COST him something to bring us back into his inheritance.

That COST won't have any VALUE if we degrade sin and make it appear as if it is nothing in our lives, as we do in our churches today to appeal to our audience. Preaching salvation without letting people know the intent behind it won't lead to salvation.

The world is wild with various doctrines and gazillions of interpretations; there are thousands of different sects and religions existing in every part of the world - to us, there is no perfection out there except in Christ.

The fundamental principle of salvation is *to be like him*. And if we are to be like him, we'll have to leave that old life behind. This means, we'll have to leave that sinful life behind and embrace Christ in his true form, as a man and as a God.

The word "GRACE" came into existence with one single act - God "freely" given us his son. That changes everything. It was a turnaround point in the life of man. Look at my son and live. Look at my son and be saved. Look at my son and be like him. Look at my son and have eternal life. His son stood for everything that God wants man to be.

GRACE cannot be achieve by power or by might, by wisdom or by strength, it is a gift that can only be freely given.

You can't force it. You can't take it. You can't build it. You can't claim it. You can't make it. You can't ask for it. Only the giver can give it and only he knows when to give it.

GRACE IS GOD DOING THE JOB THAT MAN SUPPOSED TO LABOUR FOR

The Israelites have been waiting for the messiah to come for hundreds of years. A lot of prophets (i.e. Moses and Isaiah) spoke concerning him, but the exact time of his manifestation was hidden from men.

God passed the message of salvation across to his people but he did not reveal when the event will take place, or how the event will take place.

If he did, the whole Israel will be waiting at the manger to worship Jesus immediately he was born. The inn wouldn't have been full and Mary wouldn't have labor among the sheep. Man didn't ask for salvation. Man didn't beg for it. God knew what man needed and he simply gave it. Since when did man ever know what he needed?

God didn't told men to do this or that, to make alters or burnt sacrifices before he could send his son. He didn't ask anything from us or gave us any procedures to follow before he could send his son. Before he could handover his son's life.

Grace is not something we can fully understand as a man until we look at Jesus, because he represents it all. Man's blood was not qualified to be sacrificed for redemption in the first place talk less of that of sheep, ram, and pigeon, which were but temporary solution during the days of the priests and prophets.

GRACE IS A GIFT THAT MAN CANNOT QUALIFY FOR

Man had nothing to give. Nothing. We were empty vessels - no spirit, no life, no purpose. Sin had taken it all. Jesus came to give us what we had lost in that garden. Adam was chased out, but Jesus brought us back in. Grace is not a word of power or a word of authority, *grace is a word of hope*.

Grace have nothing to do with power and authority - it has everything to do with love. God loved the world so much that he was willing to sacrifice his only son just to bring us back to himself (John 3:16). He deemed us worthy when we have nothing. He saw us beautiful in our filth and mud. He saw value in our vagueness.

Grace is not ambiguous; it is simply what it is. His love for us is way out of definition because that love is God himself. Man will be able to "precisely" define what love is when he is able to define God. Now, we are getting to the sweet part that most of us like to hear.

In our limited understanding, GRACE cannot be quantified or measured, just as love does not have an end. It cannot be weighed, no, only the giver know the true value and the true worth of his gift. Grace is a gift - the package and its full contents were only known by the giver, except to whom he chooses to reveal it to.

There are no qualifications to receive this gift from the giver, none at all. Only the giver knows if you are qualified for it or not. Only the giver knows if you are worthy of his gift. Only the giver knows what to give. The giver is GOD and the gift is JESUS CHRIST. As we can see, God is the beginning and the end of it all.

We celebrate grace in our churches but we hardly talk about what brings grace. We cannot know the importance of grace, the giver and the gift, if we failed to acknowledge the existence of sin. There was a reason the gift was given, and there was a purpose for it.

The scripture says, "for by grace you have been saved". Saved from what? That's what we are not preaching today. That's why the Christian family is what it is today. We ought to let people know why they have been saved, and what they have been saved from so that they won't be ignorant of it and walk back to where they came from.

Grace is sweet, but what makes it sweet? We all like free gift, but in this scenario, the "FREE" is "PRICELESS", and not without a reason. The reason is the measure of the price that was paid.

Grace (Part 2)

We know that God is the giver, and that the gift he has given unto us is Jesus Christ, that whosoever believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16). It is one of the most popular verses in the new testament that many of us can recite, even in our sleep.

John 3:16 summarizes his act of love, but also showed that we have our own part to take. We cannot talk about GRACE without talking about LOVE. Love precede the gift that was given; it was his love for us that made him gave what he had given us. He sent his son after he had loved us, not before he loved us.

If we are to understand grace, we must understand love. Love brought Grace. As mentioned earlier (in part one), grace have nothing to do with power and authority, but everything to do with love.

LOVE PRECEDE GRACE

God is all powerful and is authority over all things cannot be questioned, but when it comes to love, he is willing to give all up.

Giving us his son was an expression of love - an act that is beyond friendship or any relationship that we can possibly think of. It is indescribable as it makes no sense in whatever way we think about it.

Why would God give the most treasured possession in his arsenal to man? What did God see in man? The fact is, man need God more than God need man.

We are disposable. He nearly done that during the time of Noah. He nearly wiped us out, yet his love kept us. From the very beginning his love have been in existence. It is not something that happened overnight. No, his love for us go way back before the prophecies of the messiah.

He walked with Enoch. He revealed his glory unto Moses. He made an everlasting covenant with Abraham. God has never left man, not once. Although he chased man out of the garden of Eden, he has not once left him nor forsake him. He has been with us throughout the ages.

He could have killed Adam and Eve when he was disobeyed and end "our" existence in the garden, but he chose not to. He gave us a second chance by chasing us out and letting us live. Man has a lot to learn, and he (God) is willing to stay with him (man) till he knows who he (God) is.

God made man -> sin took over -> God stayed with man till he was able to save him

IMMANUEL is one of the names of Jesus Christ, which simply means "God with us." The name symbolizes his ever presence with man ever since he left the garden. His love for us goes way too deep for him to leave us in our predicament.

The giver has been preparing his gift from the old testament before we see the manifestation in the new testament.

The scripture says, "God is Love", this is not the definition of love; it simply means man cannot know love until he knows God. It is when we are able to fully understand the in and out of God that we will be able to know what love is.

And until we fully understand love, we won't know how hefty the price that was paid for our souls.

It goes beyond the natural and the existence into the unnatural and the inexistence. It is both physical and spiritual. It is not logical. Logic cannot solve this mystery and no wisdom can attain it.

The gift given by the giver is a combination of many things that we "may" not fully understand until his second coming (my next topic and the last in the "Who is Jesus" episode).

As mentioned in part one, grace as a gift is a package full of contents. Only few things are known to us as revealed by the Prophets and Apostles before us. Jesus is a name that symbolizes many things, among which is "Immanuel" that was explained earlier.

Jesus was also referred to as "The Word of God" in Revelation 19:11-16 and as the "Prince of Peace" in Isaiah 9:6.

These are not mere names if we take a closer look. How can man be made perfect? How can man live up to God’s standard? How can man be worthy of God's inheritance? God wouldn't just give man his inheritance if he knows that man will squander it. We must be at a certain level of perfection... we must be worth it.

God must have a way by which he can measure our worth - it is by our FAITH.

The scripture says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" - Ephesians 2 vs 8 (NKJV)

Now, when we believe in his son Jesus Christ, we are attesting our faith to him. We are saying, "God I'm qualify to be saved because I believe in your son." Our faith made us worth something in his hand.

Grace is free to whomever believes it. It cost nothing. Just believe and you are saved.

The giver has given his gift; it remains for us to receive it. That is a decision only we can make. No one can make the decision for us or on our behalf. Will you receive my gift? This is a question that every man will have to answer.

It isn't by merit, but by confession and acceptance.

Grace as a gift is only meant for those that are willing to accept it. The giver gives freely... but our acceptance is important.

His Second Coming

The second coming of Christ is the hope of all believers around the world. On this earth, we have nothing better to hope for. Those that are in Christ are no longer the people of this world, but are the people of the world that is to come.

Jesus made it clear before he departed that he is going to prepare a place for us in his Father's kingdom, that where he is we may also be (John 14:2-3).

Jesus departure is a necessary step in the right direction, and should not be mistaken as an act of neglectfulness. He didn't abandon his people here on earth, no.

After completing the work of salvation, which is the major reason why he came, he went back to the father to make preparations for the people that will one day be received into his inheritance.

Let's ask ourselves this question, why do I believe in Jesus?

He died and rose on the third day, some believe because of that. To some, it is because he is a miracle worker, and at one point in their lives they experience that miracle. To some, it is because their parents were Christians. To some, it is because of what they want to receive from him.

Some read, "come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I'll give you rest", and believe because of that. Because they want to rest. While these are all good reasons, they are not strong enough to uphold us in faith. Jesus wouldn't want us to believe him because of these reasons.

The fact that some people have not experience any miracle in their lives does not change the fact that he is God. Because your parents are Christian does not mean you have been saved. And if we think we'll have perfect rest or perfect peace in this world, we are only deceiving ourselves.

Our conviction must be beyond what we see or what we experience on this earth.

It must be based on our hope in him, that one day where he is we will also be. Our faith must rest on his promise, because he is the fulfilment of all. What is the essence of salvation if we perish along with this world? What is the essence of redemption if we do not get to sit with him in his father's kingdom?

This world and all that is in it will fade away sooner or later; money will lose its value. People will no longer seek for prosperity or pray for miracles. All that we desire and all that we labor for will no longer be meaningful. It's only a matter of time. Our hope is not down here, but up there.

Most of his promise are not for us to experience down here, but up there. That's the goal. That's the mark. That's the target. Up there. All that he has done is to get us cleaned, equipped, and ready for his second coming.

IF ALL THE THINGS THAT YOU ANTICIPATED FOR IS DOWN HERE, SORRY, YOU'LL BE DISAPPOINTED

Jesus told his disciples about his departure, and even encourage them to rejoice for it (John 14:28).

It is difficult to talk about the person you have never met - for one thing, people will call you crazy. There are crazy words people say out there, like "your invisible friend." Some would say, "ain't God a fairy?" Yea, it may look like that to them, and that's one of the reasons why his second coming is so important. To prove the world wrong.

Every man will eventually face death, but what lies beyond it is a mystery to all of us. Life does not end immediately we die, no, it continues somewhere. Just as when we are in our sleep and we suddenly find ourselves in strange places doing strange things that felt so real.

Albert Camus once said, "I would rather live my life as if there is a God and die to find out there is not, than live my life as if there is no God and die to find out there is."

The fact that death does not exclude anyone means his second coming may be sooner than we think. Some will die just to find out, while some will live long enough to find out. The Messiah met Simeon waiting for him in the temple; he had been told that he will not die until he sees Jesus, he lived long enough to witness it (Luke 2:25-26).

Whether in the grave or in visible life, we are all going to find out if Jesus is real or if he is just an illusion (1st Thessalonians 4:16-17). The time draw closer every hour. The time of his second coming is unknown to anyone, not even to his angels (Matthew 24:36-37). It may be now at this very moment, and it may be hundred years to come.

Look around you, all that you see and all that you touch will be gone someday. There was a time when man use cowrie to buy goods in the market; from there coin was released, then paper, then plastic, and now we are slowly moving into using invisible money. What you see and hold only exist for a limited time. It is a phase to an end that will soon come.

Some believe in rapture. Some believe in death. Either way, both is going to lead us to the same place. To heaven, or to hell. These are the only two destinations that exist after death, or after rapture. There is nothing in between. At the end of the long tunnel called life await the fulfilment of eternal life, or of eternal death.

The description of the New Jerusalem is awesome! John really put strong effort to describe it in details (Revelation 21:9-26). He must be very happy to see it, but it will be more beautiful than that. No one knows how hell looks like, unfortunately.

At the end of it all, the name of the Lord shall be glorified!

Who is Jesus?

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